

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-07 SP-01 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

INRE-00 SSO-00 IO-03 L-01 CIAE-00 EURE-00 SAB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4180

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 16564

LIMDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR LODGE'S OFFICE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, VT, FR

SUBJECT: VATICAN AND LEBANON

1. VATICAN SOURCE INFORMED US TODAY THAT CONTRARY TO PUBLIC REPORTS, CARDINAL BERTOLI, SPECIAL PAPAL MEDIATOR IN LEBANON, WILL NOT REMAIN IN BEIRUT FOR INDEFINITE PERIOD BUT WILL BE RETURNING TO ROME SUNDAY, OCT. 16. ACCORDINGLY, FRENCH GOVERNMENT, WHOSE MEDIATION OFFER WAS RECENTLY ACCEPTED BY GOL, IS DELAYING ARRIVAL OF ITS SPECIAL EMISSARY UNTIL LATE THIS WEEK SO THAT IT WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH CARDINAL'S EFFORTS. OUR SOURCE ALSO STATED THAT VATICAN IS NOT RULING OUT RETURN OF CARDINAL TO BEIRUT AT LATER DATE.

2. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, THERE WAS "COINCIDENCE" BUT NO "COORDINATION" IN THE VATICAN AND FRENCH INITIATIVES ON LEBANON. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, "EC NINE" AMBASSADORS IN BEIRUT WERE BRIEFED ON NOV. 6 BY FRENCH AMBASSADOR CONCERNING FRENCH OFFER OF "GOOD OFFICES". AT TIME OF BRIEFING THE FRENCH HAD NOT YET RECEIVED A DEFINITIVE ANSWER. PM KARAMI WAS SUSPICIOUS AND RESERVED ABOUT

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INITIATIVE AND PRESIDENT FRANJIEH WAS OPPOSED TO BRINGING IN

"OUTSIDERS".

3. COMMENT: IN SENDING CARDINAL BERTOLI TO LEBANON, VATICAN UNDERSCORED ITS SPECIAL INTERESTS IN MAINTAINCE OF LEBANON'S INTEGRITY AND SOVEREIGNTY. IT IS INTERESTING THAT SO FAR THERE HAVE BEEN NO DIPLOMATIC CONSULTATIONS IN ROME BETWEEN VATICAN AND GOF ON THEIR RESPECTIVE INITIATIVES. THE VATICAN HAD PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED TO US FEARS THAT SOME (UNIDENTIFIED) WESTERN POWERS WERE CONTEMPLATING DIVISION OF LEBANON AS WAY OF SETTLING CURRENT CRISIS. AT THIS STAGE, WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER VATICAN SUSPECTS FRANCE AS BEING ONE OF THESE POWERS. BEAUDRY

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